

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: DELAY IN TRANSFER OF AIR FRANCE SERVICES TO
ROISSY

SUMMARY: WHILE PANAM REMAINS BITTER OVER DELAY IN
MOVE OF AIR FRANCE NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICE TO ROISSY,
PANAM IS ON RECORD AS ONLY PROTESTING POOR CONNECTING
SERVICES PLANNED FOR ROISSY. TWA FEARS NO COMPETITIVE
DISADVANTAGE. EMBASSY FEELS FORMAL DEMARCHE TO GOF NOT JUSTIFIED
BUT WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION RAISING IN FORTHCOMING BILATERAL CONSULT-
ATIONS QUESTION OF DEALY IN TRANSFER AIR FRANCE SERVICES TO ROISSY
AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF U.S. CARRIERS.

1. RE RCAA CORRESPONDENCE WITH EB/AV RE POSSIBLE IMPACT
ON U.S. CARRIERS OF DELAY IN TRANSFER OF AIR FRANE'S
NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICES TO NEW CHARLES DE GUALLE AIRPORT AT
ROISSY, FOLLOWING IS UPDATED REPORT IN ANTICIPATION OF OPENING
OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS JANUARY 22.

2. PLANS STILL CALL FOR ALL SERVICES OF PANAM, TWA, AIR CANADA,
JAL, UTA AN AIR AFRIQUE TO OPERATE FROM ROISSY WHEN NEW AIRPORT
OPENS MID-MARCH 1974, PLUS EASTERN EUROPEAN, CARIBBEAN AND SOME
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WESTERN EUROPEAN SERVICES OF AIR FRANCE. ALL OTHER AIR FRANCE

SERVICES, INCLUDING NORTH ATLANTIC, WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE FROM ORLY UNTIL NOVEMBER 1974.

3. WE HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED MUCH SUCCESS IN LEARNING PRECISE REASON FOR DELAY IN COMPLETION OF AIR FRANCE MOVE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT PROBED TOO ACTIVELY IN FRENCH CIRCLES IN ORDER NOT TO PREJUDICE POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION VIS-A-VIS GOF. VALLE OF AIR FRANCE HAS INFORMED US LACONICALLY THAT DELAY NECESSITATED IN ORDER AVOID "SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL OUTLAY", WITHOUT GOING INTO FURTHER DETAIL. MEM. RIVOAL, BEGGING OFF SUPPLY OF DEFINITIVE ANSWER WHICH SHE SAID COULD ONLY COME FROM AIR FRANCE DIRECTOR GENERAL PIERRE COT, SAID THAT CERTAIN OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS HAD DEVELOPED SINCE ROISSY NOT BUILT ACCORDING AIR FRANCE SPECS; THESE PROBLEMS WOULD ULTIMATELY BE OVERCOME WHEN AIR FRANCE'S OWN TERMINAL CONSTRUCTED AT ROISSY (COMPLETION DATE 1978).

4. PANAM SUSPECTS REASON FOR DELAY IS AIR FRANCE DESIRE ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE EDGE IN NORTH ATLANTIC CARRIAGE BY OPERATING THROUGH PEAK SUMMER SEASON FROM ORLY, SINCE ORLY IS WELL KNOWN TO TRAVELING PUBLIC AND HAS EXCELLENT CONNECTING SERVICES. PANAM SAYS AIR CANADA ALSO VERY CONCERNED. TWA, HOWEVER, SUSPECTS THAT REASONS ARE IN FACT PURELY OPERATIONAL AND STEM FROM MAGNITUDE OF PROBLEM OF MOVING TO ROISSY ALL OF AIR FRANCE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES. PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IMPEDING MOVE OF ALL SERVICES TO ROISSY IN SHORT PERIOD WOULD IN MEANTIME REQUIRE FERRYING OF AIRCRAFT FROM ROISSY TO ORLY FOR SERVICING IF ALL AIR FRANCE FLIGHTS WERE MOVED TO ROISSY AT OUTSET, ACCORDING TWA.

5. IN VIEW COMPLAINTS*FROM ROISSY-BOUND CARRIERS OVER ABSENCE OF CONNECTING SERVICES THERE IN INITIAL PERIOD, SGAC IN AUGUST INFORMED CARRIERS ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR SOME CONNECTING FLIGHTS TO DOMESTIC POINTS IN FRANCE AS WELL AS TO CERTAIN POINTS IN EUROPE BY AIR FRANCE. FOR LONDON CONNECTION BEA WOULD JOIN WITH AIR FRANCE TO PROVIDE TEN DAILY FREQUENCIES. UPON RECEIPT OF SCHEDULED DETAILS PANAM DETERMINED THAT SO-CALLED CONNECTIONS WERE WHOLLY INADEQUATE, E.G., FLIGHTS TO MARSEILLE NICE AND TOULOUSE PERMIT NO DIRECT CONNECTION WITH MOST PANAM FLIGHTS, THERE IS NO DIRECT CONNECTION WITH FRANKFURT, ETC. PANAM THEREFORE WROTE SGAC EARLY DEC. URGING BETTER CONNECTING SERVICES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VICES BUT AS YET HAS RECEIVED NO REPLY. IN MEANTIME, PANAM HAS THREATENED DELAY ITS MOVE TO ROISSY UNTIL ASSURANCE RECEIVED THAT BETTER CONNECTING SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED.

6. TWA, HOWEVER, DOES NOT SHARE PANAM'S CONCERN. ON CONTRARY, TWA'S DIRECTOR OF PASSENGER SERVICES THOUGHT THAT ROISSY CARRIES

S WOULD HAVE COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER AIR FRANCE ON NORTH ATLANTIC SINCE ROISSY WILL BE MORE CONVENIENT THAN IS ORLY TO NORTHERN AND WESTERN PARIS AREAS FROM WHICH HE CLAIMED BULK OF PARIS TRAVELING PUBLIC COMES. (COMMENT: VALIDITY OF THIS ARGUMENT SEEMS QUESTIONABLE ON SEVERAL GROUNDS. PANAM ALSO CONTENTS PROVINCES ARE FASTEST GROWING TRAVEL MARKET IN FRANCE, WHICH IS WHY PANAM CLAIMS TO SET SUCH STORE ON NEED FOR GOOD CONNECTIONS AT ROISSY WITH OTHER DOMESTIC POINTS IN FRANCE)

COMMENT: TWA DISINTEREST IN DELAY OF AIR FRANCE MOVE AND PANAM DE FACTO ACCEPTANCE IF CONNECTING SERVICES ARE ADEQUATE WOULD HARDLY JUSTIFY FORMAL DEMARCHE TO GOF PROTESTING DELAY ON GROUNDS IT COULD PLACE U.S. CARRIERS AT COMMERCIAL DISADVANTAGE. MOREOVER, GOF/AIR FRANCE UNLIKELY TO ALTER PLANS AT THIS LATE STAGE. HOWEVER, IF DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THAT BILATERAL AND CHICAGO CONVENTION IMPLICATIONS WARRANT NOT PASSING OVER THIS QUESTION IN SILENCE, EMBASSY WOULD SEE NO OBJECTION TO RAISE IN LOW KEY WITH FRENCH DURING NEXT WEEK'S BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. INDEED, SINCE SGAC HAS SELDOM LET PASS OPPORTUNITY TO CHARGE US WITH VIOLATION OF BILATERAL OBLIGATIONS, GENERALLY AS RESULT LATE FILINGS BY U.S. CARRIERS BUT ALSO ON OCCASION CERTAIN CAB ACTIONS, IT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO MORE PRUDENT AND UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE BY GOF IN FUTURE TO REMIND IT OF ITS OWN OBLIGATIONS. WEAK POINT IN FRENCH ARGUMENT, OF COURSE, IS THAT ROISSY HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION SINCE 1967, WHICH SHOULD HAVE GIVEN AMPLE TIME TO PLAN MOVE TO ROISSY BY AIR FRANCE MAJOR SERVICES SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH OTHER CARRIERS. STONE

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